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SUBJECT: CODEL COBLE ENGAGES WITH ESTONIANS ON LAW
ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION AND THE GWOT

¶1. (SBU) Summary: During an April 18 - 19 visit to Tallinn Congressman Howard Coble and Congressional staff discussed narcotics, shipping and port security, and other law enforcement issues with the Members of Parliament, Minister of Foreign Affairs Urmas Paet, Minister of Internal Affairs Kalle Lannet and Justice Minister Rein Lang. Congressman Coble shared his appreciation for the Estonian contributions in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and discussed at length the importance of the Estonian's participation in the UK-led PRT in Helmand. The Congressman also discussed Estonia-Russia relations and encouraged GOE efforts to promote democracy in the region. End summary.

ESTONIAN SUPPORT IN THE GWOT

¶2. (SBU) Congressman Coble made clear in all meetings U.S. appreciation for Estonia standing shoulder to shoulder with the United States in the GWOT, especially in regards to Estonian troops serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. The GOE assured the Congressman that Estonia is and will continue to be a strong ally of the United States. Foreign Minister Paet and Justice Minister Lang expressed their hope that parliamentary authorization for Estonia's troop mission in Iraq would be extended past 2006.

POPPY ERADICATION IN AFGHANISTAN

¶3. (SBU) Congressman Coble stressed that Estonia's increased contributions in Afghanistan are in its own self interest. Helmand province had become the epicenter of opium production, the bulk of which is smuggled into Europe for heroin. Profits are falling into the hands of organized crime and terrorists. FM Paet said he had expected Estonians might be reluctant to become more involved in Afghanistan, given that over fifty Estonians had been killed during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. But this had not been the case and there has been little to no adverse public reaction. However, as Helmand is one of the more dangerous missions in Afghanistan, the GOE is aware of the likelihood of casualties. Congressman Coble noted that it was thus all the more important to alert the public to Estonia's vulnerability to the narcotics trade originating from Afghanistan.

THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS AT HOME

¶4. (SBU) GOE officials and Members of Parliament all agreed that the war against drugs is a top priority. Even though Estonia is primarily a transit country for

narcotics, the spill over into the Russian-speaking community is of real concern in urban communities. MP Jaanus Rahumagi said narcotics is now the largest source of revenue for organized crime in Estonia, and that the average age of first time drug users is now 13 years. The rise of organized crime poses an immense challenge for Estonian security and law enforcement, as criminal organizations are becoming better funded and, therefore, more sophisticated in countering GOE law enforcement efforts. MP Nelli Kalikova also brought to Congressman Coble's attention the knock-on effect heroin use has had in the spread of HIV in Estonia.

15. (SBU) In light of Estonia's challenges to fight its drug problem, Congressman Coble stressed the need for the drafting and implementation of asset seizure and forfeiture legislation. Justice Minister Lang said the MoJ was carefully examining other systems, including the U.S. system, in order to find the most suitable model for Estonia. MP Rahumagi said that opposition party Res Publica had introduced its own draft asset seizure and forfeiture legislation that Parliament will debate in May. In addition to asset seizure and forfeiture, the GOE wants to increase the powers of the Prosecutors office and the police. At the moment, the MOJ and MoIA believe too many restrictions are placed on Estonian investigators.

PORT SECURITY MEASURE

16. (SBU) Estonia's nine percent economic growth has made Tallinn an ever more important regional hub for trade and transit. Congressman Coble visited Muuga Port to see the port security and shipping inspection and

security mechanisms put in place. The Customs and Tax Board were also present and demonstrated the use of radioactive pagers and fiber-optic cameras provided by the EXBS program. The officials described several sensitive interdictions where the equipment had played an important role.

ESTONIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS

17. (SBU) Both FM Paet and Justice Minister Lang spoke at length about the challenge of managing the Russia relationship. Lang made it clear that he did not actually fear Russian encroachment over Estonian sovereignty, but said that Russian attitudes were an obstacle, especially in law enforcement and security where common sense would suggest better cooperation could benefit both countries. In a meeting at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) Secretary General Mart Kraft mentioned the unreliability of his Russian counterparts in implementing cooperative agreements and information sharing.

PROMOTING DEMOCRACY ESTONIAN STYLE

18. (SBU) Congressman Coble congratulated Estonia on its role in promoting the spread of democracy. FM Paet spoke at length about Estonia's efforts to assist the opposition in Belarus, which included election monitors, grants to Belarusian university students expelled for their political affiliations to study in Estonia, and support for more robust action on the EU's part within EU fora.

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